

In the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A gaming system including a system controller, a credit establishment facility, a plurality of gaming machines, a communications system connecting each of the plurality of gaming machines to the system controller, and a player identification device ~~having an associated~~ for association with player credit,

each of the gaming machines having

(1) a credit recording facility,

(2) a player input device,

(3) a player identification input device responsive to a player identification device; and

(4) a game controller to play a game when a player has established a credit in the credit recording facility of the respective gaming machine,

wherein the credit establishment facility is arranged to establish a player credit and to associate that credit with a player identification device of the player establishing the credit, and wherein said player credit is added to a gaming machine by providing said player identification device to the player identification input device, said credit being held in said credit recording facility of the gaming machine, and wherein a gaming machine is locked to prevent so that the gaming machine no longer operates to play a game ~~play of the gaming machine~~ by any player, via player action solely when player credit held in the credit recording facility of the respective machine is non-zero, and unlocked so that the gaming machine operates to play a game when the machine is supplied via the identification input device with the player identification device associated with the credit held in the credit recording facility of the respective gaming machine.

2. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the gaming machines connected to the system includes a reservation button, and wherein said player action includes actuation of said reservation button ~~which when pressed while the player tracking device is present causes the machine to lock and prevent further play in the absence of the respective player tracking device.~~

3. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in claim 2 ~~44~~, wherein said actuation of said the reservation button occurs, when pressed while the player tracking device is present, ~~causes the machine to lock only when the player's credit is non-zero.~~ received by said player identification input device.

4. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in claim 1 wherein ~~each~~ a gaming machine connected to the system includes a timeout device, and wherein ~~such that~~ when the machine is locked for more than a predetermined time any credit held in the credit recording facility of the machine is transferred to the system controller and held there for the player and the machine is unlocked to allow another player to establish a credit in the credit recording facility of the machine and to commence play.

5. (Cancelled).

6. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in claim 1 wherein the player credit established by the credit establishment facility and associated with a player ~~tracking means~~ identification device of a player establishing the credit is held in the system controller.

7. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in claim 6, wherein each gaming machine connected to the system includes a credit importing facility such that when a player ~~tracking~~ identification device is supplied to a gaming machine that is not currently holding a player credit in its credit recording facility and is unlocked, the gaming machine will signal the system controller to transfer the players credit of the player supplying the player ~~tracking~~ identification device to the credit recording facility of the respective gaming machine.

8. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in claim 7, wherein the player credit held in the system controller is transferred to the credit recording facility of the machine selected by the player when the player inserts the associated player identification ~~tracking~~ device into the ~~tracking~~ player identification input device of the selected machine.

9. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the player ~~tracking~~ identification device is a token.

10. (Original) The system as claimed in claim 9, wherein the token is a magnetic stripe card.

11. (Original) The system as claimed in claim 9, wherein the token is a smart card.

12. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in claim 9, wherein the token is issued by ~~the~~ a gaming establishment as an in-house identification mechanism.

13. (Previously Amended) The system as claimed in claim 9, wherein the token is a financial transaction card issued by a remote financial institution.

14. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in claim 9, wherein the token is a ticket ~~printed by the gaming establishment operating the system and~~ readable by ~~a bill~~ an acceptor mounted within the gaming machine.

15. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in any one of claims 1, wherein ~~tracking~~ player identification input device is a bio-sensor input device and the player ~~tracking~~ identification device is a physical attribute of the player.

16. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in claim 15, wherein the ~~tracking~~ player identification input device is a fingerprint reader and the player ~~tracking~~ identification device is a fingerprint of the player.

17. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in claim 15, wherein the ~~tracking~~ player identification input device is an iris scanner and the player ~~tracking~~ identification device is an eye of the player.

18. (Currently Amended) A gaming machine for connection to a gaming system wherein the gaming system comprises a system controller, a plurality of gaming machines, and a communications system connecting ~~the gaming machine~~ each of the plurality of gaming machines to the system controller, the gaming machine comprising

- (1) a credit recording facility,
- (2) a player input device ~~responsive to a player tracking device~~,
- (3) a tracking input device responsive to a player tracking device, and
- (4) a game controller arranged to play a game when a player has established a credit in the credit recording facility of the gaming machine,

wherein the gaming machine is locked so that the gaming machine no longer operates to play a game ~~to prevent play of the gaming machine~~ by any player, via player action solely at a time when player credit held in the credit recording facility of the gaming machine ~~is~~ is non-zero, and ~~locked~~ unlocked so that the gaming machine operates to play a game when a player tracking device is afterward supplied to the machine via the tracking input device, which identifies the player tracking device as being associated with the credit held in the credit recording facility of the gaming machine.

19. (Currently Amended) The gaming machine as claimed in claim 18, which includes a reservation button; and wherein said player action includes actuation of said reservation button. ~~which when pressed while the player tracking device is present causes the machine to lock and prevent further play in the absence of the respective player tracking means.~~

20. (Currently Amended) The gaming machine as claimed in claim 19, wherein the reservation button, ~~when pressed~~ is actuated while ~~the~~ said player tracking device is received by said tracking input device. ~~present, causes the machine to lock only when the players credit is non-zero.~~

21. (Cancelled).

22. (Currently Amended) The gaming machine as claimed in claim 18 wherein ~~the a~~ player credit is established by ~~the a~~ a credit establishment facility and associated with a player tracking device of a player establishing the credit ~~is~~ , said player credit to be held in the system controller.

23. (Currently Amended) The gaming machine as claimed in claim 22, includes a credit importing facility such that when a player tracking device is supplied to a gaming machine that is not currently holding a player credit in its credit recording facility and is unlocked, the gaming machine will signal the system controller to transfer the ~~players~~ player's credit of the player supplying the player tracking device to the credit recording facility of the respective gaming machine.

24. (Previously Amended) The gaming machine as claimed in claim 23, wherein the player credit held in the system controller is transferred to the credit recording

facility of the machine selected by the player when the player inserts the associated player tracking device into the tracking input device of the selected machine.

25. (Previously Amended) The gaming machine as claimed in claim 18 wherein the player tracking device is a token.

26. (Original) The gaming machine as claimed in claim 25, wherein the token is a magnetic stripe card.

27. (Original) The gaming machine as claimed in claim 25, wherein the token is a smart card.

28. (Currently Amended) The gaming machine as claimed in claim 25, wherein token is issued by ~~the~~ a gaming establishment as an in-house identification mechanism.

29. (Original) The gaming machine as claimed in claim 25, wherein token is a financial transaction card issued by a remote financial institution.

30. (Currently Amended) The gaming machine as claimed in claim 25, wherein the token is a ticket ~~printed by the gaming establishment operating the gaming machine and~~ readable by ~~a bill~~ an acceptor mounted within the gaming machine.

31. (Currently Amended) The gaming machine as claimed in claim 18 wherein tracking input device is a bio-sensor input device and the player tracking input device ~~means~~ is a physical attribute of the player.

32. (Previously Amended) The gaming machine as claimed in claim 31, wherein the tracking input device is a fingerprint reader and the player tracking device is a fingerprint of the player.

33. (Previously Amended) The gaming machine as claimed in claim 31, wherein the tracking input device is an iris scanner and the player tracking device is an eye of the player.

Claims 34 – 43 (Cancelled).

44. (New) The system as claimed in claim 2, wherein said player action further includes use of said player identification device.

45. (New) The system as claimed in claim 2 wherein said player action includes removal of said player identification card from said player identification device.